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# A LETTER TO THE Earl of SHAFTSBURY

this 9th. of July, 1680.

From TOM TELL-TROTH a Downright Englishman.

My Lord,

I Have lived to see your Lordship Great as well as Popular, and a stout Assertor of the *Protestant* Religion and Interest. Wherefore to your Lordship have I thought fit, in this time of danger to our native Countrey, to lay before you the great Mischiefs that both the Monarchy and *Protestant* Religion do suffer, in respect of the present Designs of *Papist* and *Commonwealths-man*: And when I have discover'd to your Lordship their Intrigues, as far as my strict scrutiny and search into them (besides sufficient Testimonies from others truly informed) have satisfied me, I hope we shall take such adequate Measures from them, to satisfy both your Lordship and this Kingdom, that Ruine and Desolation will come swift on us, Confusion and every evil Work, if some speedy Remedy be not instantly proposed by the Wisdom of the great Council of this Nation.

And first, my Lord, Your Lordship will please to give me leave to make a Parallel, between the past Actions of the designing men before and after 1641. to the happy Restoration of the King, by it I shall be able to satisfy your Lordship, that what was then designed and effected upon the Person of the late King, Church of *England*, and Government, were the results of such pernicious Counsels and Designs, as are now hatching by these Sons of *Belial*, to the present disturbance, if not ruine of our flourishing Church and Kingdoms.

Now 'tis obvious to all that have had any knowledge of the late Transactions before 1640. and after, that the *Papist* seeing our Church so well guarded with purity of Doctrine and Faith, with innocent Ceremonies, to defend her from the Invasion of slovenly and dishonourable worshipping of the great God; as well also to avoid the Superstition and Foppery of the Worship of the Church of *Rome*. Behold what emissaries were there sent out, and with what Cloathing to deceive; the *Puritan* must be drawn in to make an outcry against Canons, Ceremonies, and whatever was enjoined by Law in the Worship of God must be *Antichristian*, at least it must be said unlawfully imposed on their tender Consciences. From sowing these Doctrines, the poor and the ignorant were taught to believe Bishops to be the very Limbs of *Antichrist*, and Superstition and Idolatry brought by them into the Church; and many worthy Patriots, such as *Pryn*, *Bastwick*, and *Burton*, &c. would smell Popery and Superstition in Gown, Surplice, Cross in Baptism, worshipping God towards the East, (a primitive Custom in the Church of God) &c. then publish to the World the great care they had to bring things to a due Reformation both in Church and State. But behold the consequence of this Undertaking; they had no sooner gone about to

undermine the Church of *England*, but then 'twas fit time to call in question too the Miscarriages of State, and to be sure Archbishop *Laud*, who was the most eminent Assertor of the Rights of the Church, and as true a *Protestant* as ever lived, must be the first man cryed down by the Teachers and the Rabble, for being Popishly inclined, or rather for being a *Papist*, and must be butcher'd too for that supposition ; by his death ended the Tranquillity of the once flourishing Church of *England* : Thus far had *Papist* hand in hand with Fanatick Rage and Zeal triumphed over us. But after this, 'twas not enough to bring our Church low, but we must yet go higher---well ! What encouragement has the King given to *Papists* of late, by preferring them to Places of great consequence in the Government, such as were *Strafford*, &c.--- These Persons, ay those, must be removed for evil Counsellors, or we shall have no Peace in our *Israel* ; accordingly our zealous Teachers sent their Disciples abroad in all Avenues of the City, to cry down evil Counsellors, for that their design was to bring in Popery, and destroy Liberty, ay the Liberty of the Subject. And then forsooth Ship-money, (a huge burden to what we have felt since) was (against *Magna Charta*) indeed every thing in the Government found fault with, as either Popishly or Arbitrarily inclin'd, then cry out for Reformation, Reformation. And when for Peace-sake, our good King had granted many of their unreasonable Demands, and had deliver'd to their Fury innocent Blood, to prevent, as he thought, the shedding much more, yet would not their Rage stop here, but at last King, Church, and all brought to destruction, by the most horrid Rebellion and Villany, as can scarce be parallell'd in any Kingdom in the World in all its circumstances.

And now, my Lord, one would think, that this pretended glorious Reformation, should have produced some Settlement by this time to the tottering Kingdom: No truly ; we found nothing but Sect springing out of Sect, and they that once prayed and fought together against the Peace of the Kingdom in one Body, and as it were, under one denomination, are presently dwindled into many little Parties and Saintships, and every one crying to his Neighbour, *I am holier than thou art* ; so that from *Papist* sprung *Puritan*, from *Puritan* *Presbyterian*, from *Presbyterian* *Independent*, from thence *Anabaptists*, *Antinomians*, *Fifth-Monarchists*, *Sweet Singers in Israel*, *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, and the Lord knows what, till by and through the Inconstancy of their Persons and Judgements, and the various Frenzes of the several Humours, all was reduced to a Chaos ; so that neither a single Usurper, nor a Parliament without a King, nor Committee of Safety, nor Keepers of the Liberties, or Councils of Officers, and Strength of Arms, could produce any Quiet, till God wonderfully restored Him, whose undoubted Right it was to sway the Sceptre of these Kingdoms. And thus, my Lord, I have in short given your Lordship an Account of what has been acted in those Times : Let me now crave leave further to make the Parallel with the present Times ; and therein if I reflect on some of the busie and designing men, I hope I shall not break the Laws of Decorum, because things are brought to that Crisis, that if an honest *English* Heart will not now speak home to the purpose, (for ought I can see) he may evermore hold his peace.

Well then, my Lord, Do we not now perceive as clear as the Sun at Noon day, that the same Men, or Men of the same Principles are again hard at work to undermine, and destroy both our Church and State too ? What divided Interests and Factions have there been for Seven Years last past, and more, to bring the King and Governours into disgrace, by frequent Clubs at Coffee-houses and Taverns, on purpose to break the Bonds of Unity among us. From these Places, and Sinks of Sedition and Rebellion, have there not been many of a higher form, who through Discontent, or love of Faction, and change of Government, or for not being continued or prefer'd to the Highest and most Honourable Places therein, have endeavoured all they can to breed Differences between the Two Houses of Parliament,

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by throwing in some little matter with a Ball of Contention at the end on't, purposely to hinder the prosecution of what should tend to the advancement of the Publick Weal; And what can be more plain, than that such Designs were like those of 1641. Since, because the Bishops would not herd with Common-wealth-mens Interests, (Yet my Lord, I do believe the Bishops are as prudent Men, and can as well tell the nature of an Oath, together with the Design as well as the Consequence thereof,) as any States-man I know of in the Kingdom, let them pretend to what they will; And besides, I am sure their Interest is so interwoven in the Monarchy of *England*, that neither *Popery*, nor any other Interest besides that of their own Church as established by Law, can any ways preserve them, unless they will all as one Man fall down and Worship the great Image, and be all things to all men, that they may be sure to get something, as many (my Lord) pretended Famous Statesmen have done in the several Changes of Government in these Kingdoms; (but that is not to be supposed of them.) since they would nor, or did ever joyn with any such Interest as oppos'd Church or State; and thus how did both City and Country, Clubs, and Coffee-houses ring, that the Bishops were the only opposers of the true Interest of the Kingdom, and the great occasion why Justice could not be done on Capital and Notorious Offenders. This, my Lord, is a true spice of old 1641. and Your Lordship cannot but observe, that it hath brought the Bishops into suspicion with the Vulgar sort, that they are driving on the *Papish Design*, and that there is not above Two *Protestant* Bishops amongst them all, as they give out.

Well, but this will not do yet; 'tis not so long since *Laurel* was murder'd, and *Stratford*: People sufficiently smarted under Covenanting Reformers, and Army-Saints, and 'tis not easy to play the same Game over again the same way; and this the Designing Men see, and so are said to have other Artifices to rend the Government in pieces, and reduce it to its former Chaos or Designed Common-wealth; So that if neither disquieting or dividing Parliaments, nor secret combining Clubs against Great Ministers of State, nor a seeming weariness of the Monarchy of *England*, nor disgracing the Governours of the Church, nor suspicion of *Popery*, and the introducing thereof, will do the business to exasperate the People, as in 1641. why truly then comes forth a *PLOT* full of *Treason* and *Popery*; then forsooth the D. must needs be the Foundation of this *Damnable Plot*, and the Discoverers (who no doubt have been blessed Instruments to save us at this time from the Paw of Antichrist,) must be revered as Demy-Gods among the Vulgar, but more especially among the Precious *Independant* and *Anabaptist* Faction; But not to reflect on the Kings Evidence, for no doubt deservedly did those suffer who were condemned by the Justice of our Laws, and many more deservedly may that have had a hand in that pernicious and Bloody Design against His Majesties Sacred Person and Government. In this Hurly Burly what a Confusion did it bring the Kingdom into? How did it necessitate the King to prorogue and Adjourn, yea, and Dissolve Parliaments from time to time? when he could not but so do for the preservation of the Peace of the Kingdom, and defeating the Designs both of Popish and Self-designing Men who sought to disturb it; and so apparent this was, that no Loyal Heart but trembled at it: Then again forsooth all miscarriages of this nature must be attributed to the D. and his Party, and given out by the Designing Men, that no Parliaments should ever sit again, but all would be Arbitrary, and accordingly Guards must be doubled to defend us from *Jesuits*, and *Popery*, and this Bugbear of *Arbitrary Government*. Now in the name of *Machiavel* where are we going next? Oh! cries the first and deepest among the Designers, Let us but keep off the King from Parliaments till his Revenue will not answer the Charge of the Crown, and put him into the condition his Father of Blessed Memory was, that he will be necessitated to call one, then he shall be obliged to redress all the Grievances, hang all *Plotters*, (provided they be

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none but such as are *Popishly* inclin'd,) punish Church Offenders, and Saint Persecutors; then shall he be oblig'd to hearken to every thing we shall propose about the *Succession*; Then we shall be able to make our own terms with him, either we will have *M.* or we will know why; We will have one *Black Box*, or other found wherein the Writing is that will prove what we would have Legitimate, and *Essential* to the Crown, in opposition to *Royal Word*, and whatever Demonstrations shall be to the contrary, provided it effectually hinders, and deprives the known, true and *Lawful Successor* that's *Popishly* affected; and we will never leave Clubbing nor Meeting, till we have effected this, maugre all former Delights by *Popish Councils*, or *Protestants* whatsoever.

Indeed my Lord, it were to be wisht for the quiet and welfare of the Nation; that these, and such like Designs were laid aside, and every one study to do his own business, to obey wholsom Laws, then to trust again to new Law-makers: For my part, My Lord, I wonder what it is these Men would have, if they think that ever *Popery* or *Arbitrary Government* can govern in this Kingdom, then they have reason to be thus concern'd: But my Lord, though I am a plain old *English-man*, I can see as far it may be as one that sees less; and I protest, my Lord, that after having read over abundance of such ware as little *Andrew Marvel's* Unhoopable *Wit and Polity*, and the *Independent Comment* amongst it, together with the *Growth of Popery*, &c. as also the *Naked Truth, Treatises about French Interests*, and the *Succession of the Crown*, and all this bustle they have made amongst us. To say the truth, my Lord, I am *Tom tell Troth*, and between your Lordship and I, I do not believe there's any need of such Books, or any such Jealousies; for in Gods Name, what can preserve us, but being zealous for our Religion, and obedient to our Superiors? and what can preserve them, but the Love of their Subjects, and governing according to the Laws they have made, and are oblig'd to maintain? and for my part, I don't see any Invasion of Liberty & Property as they term it; I see indeed a sort of men, will be always restless and buzzing the vulgar Ear with strange Fears and Jealousies, which tends to nothing but destruction both of Prince and People. Truly, my Lord, (your Lordship being a Person of such eminent Parts, and having known most of the publick Humours of this Land and People this 40 years) I think your Lordship would do well to find out some of these Underminers of the publick Peace of the Kingdom, that meet in Taverns, and other publick Houses, and by your strong Arguments convince them, that this is not the way to bring about their Designs, whatsoever mixture of Councils they may have; And since your Lordship lives in that great City wherein these Persons are said to reside, Your Lordship would send them such unquestionable Rules to walk by, as may tend to the securing of the peace of the Kingdom, rooting out all Jealousies and Fears of *Popery* and *Arbitrary Government*, As also to endeavour to fix them to the old ways of Loyalty and Obedience, which are the only paths of Peace to dwell in: Then shall we see that 'twill be our Interests (whatever we imagine Liberty and Property to be,) to promote the Honour of God, and the Religion of this Kingdom as established by Law, to Honour, and obey the King according to the Laws, to love one another as Men and Christians, and to lay all our Heads, Hearts and Hands together to support the same. My Lord, I shall now conclude this long Epistle without any other Complement, than that I am,

Your Lordships Most Humble Servant,

Tom Tell-troth.

Wilt. the 9th.  
of July 1680.







